

The “Japanese Turn” in Fine Dining in the United States 1980–2017

Public Lecture by Samuel Yamashita

In the 1970s, Japanese chefs began to appear in the kitchens of *nouvelle cuisine* chefs in France for further training, and scores more arrived in succeeding decades. Paul Bocuse, Alain Chapel, J el Robuchon, and other leading French culinary experts also started visiting Japan to teach their counterparts and to sample Japanese cuisine, and some eventually opened restaurants there. In the 1980s and 1990s, their frequent visits to Japan and the steady flow of Japanese stagiaires to French restaurants in Europe and the United States encouraged a series of changes that culminated in what Yamashita calls “Japanese turn.” Chefs at fine-dining establishments in Los Angeles, New York City, and the Bay Area began to use an ever widening array of Japanese ingredients, adopt the Japanese tasting-menu format, employ Japanese culinary techniques, and even add Japanese dishes to their menus. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the wide acceptance of Japanese ingredients, culinary techniques, and concepts like *umami* in the restaurant world suggests that Japanese food and foodways have been naturalized and now are a part of American haute cuisine.



Date: April 17, 2019

Time: 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Place: UHM Library, Hamilton 306

Samuel Yamashita grew up in Kailua, a town on the northeastern shore of Oahu. A Woodrow Wilson Fellowship led to graduate work in Japanese history at the University of Michigan and a postdoctoral year at the Reischauer Institute at Harvard University. He is currently the Henry E. Sheffield Professor of History at Pomona College. Since 2009 he has been working on food as a historical subject. His first monographic foray into food studies, *Hawai‘i Regional Cuisine: The Food Movement That Changed the Way Hawai‘i Eats*, will appear in 2019, shedding light on an important regional cuisine movement in Hawai‘i. He continues to work on Pacific Rim fusion cuisine and a history of Japanese food and foodways. This lecture is part of his ongoing exploration of culinary culture in Japan and beyond.

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